



IMPACT OF FOOD IN STRESS BEHAVIOUR

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ABSTRACT

Stress is your body's way of responding to any kind of demand. It can be caused by both good and bad experiences. When people feel stressed by something going on around them, their bodies react by releasing chemicals into the blood. These chemicals give people more energy and strength, which can be a good thing if their stress is caused by physical danger. But this can also be a bad thing, if their stress is in response to something emotional and there is no outlet for this extra energy and strength. Stress is the feeling of being under too much mental or emotional pressure. Pressure becomes stress when you feel unable to cope. Everyone reacts differently to stress and experiences different stressors, or things that cause stress. Common stressors include work, relationships, and money. Stress can affect how you feel, think, and behave. It can also impact how your body functions. Common signs of stress include anxiety, worrisome thinking, sleeping problems, sweating, loss of appetite, and difficulty concentrating, among others. It is worth taking the time to learn different strategies and techniques for managing your stress before there are serious consequences for your mental and physical well-being. Diet can play an important role in the relief of stress. Eat a balanced diet and avoid foods that may increase tension.

Keywords: Stress, balanced diet, good stress, distress, eustress, mental health, depression, busy lifestyle, muscles tension, eating habits, edgy personality, physical health, psychological health, fad dieting, energy, cortisol, tension etc.

Stress is a common term used by people when they encounter a problem in their life. Stress is the way human beings react both physically and mentally to changes events and situations in their lives. People experience stress in different ways and for different reasons. The reaction is based on your perception of an event or situation. If you view a situation negatively, you will likely feel *distressed*—overwhelmed, oppressed, or out of control. Distress is the more familiar form of stress. The other form, *eustress*, results from a “positive” view of an event or situation, which is why it is also called “good stress”. Physical and psychological responses to the pressure of daily life are Stress. Stress is a common problem that we all have to deal with in our lives, some more than others. There are many factors that bring stress upon the body, such as the job of the person and certain events that happen in their life. Stress is a fact of life, wherever you are and whatever you are doing. You cannot avoid stress, but you can learn to manage it so it doesn't manage you. When people are suffering from stress when they start to notice changes in body like- Muscle tension, Loss of focus/concentration, anxiety, headaches, increased heart rate, having a short temper, an edgy personality, fatigue, Irritations, trouble falling or staying asleep, problems with memory, loss of appetite. If the stress is not treated, it is possible for further damage to be inflicted on the body, resulting in degeneration. External features such as ulcers and Sores can appear. Stress can also inflict long term illnesses to the body like- Diabetes, Depression, Mental health problems, Heart/Cardiovascular problems, Bowel/Digestive Problems, cancer, lung ailments, accidents, cirrhosis of the liver, and suicide. . One of the main issues with stress is that it can cause unhealthy eating habits. This applies mainly to people who are always on the go and lead a busy lifestyle. People that fall into this category often endure large amounts of stress and have no time to fit a balanced nutrition around their busy schedule. Additionally, stress makes the body crave foods that are high in fats and sugars. This flaw in eating, in time will inflict a greater stress on the body, plus other problems that pose a threat to your physical and mental health. When a person becomes overwhelmed with stress, a common reaction is a sudden urge to eat food. The majority of the time, foods consumed in this situation will be 'convenience foods' that are considered a quick fix to nullify stress. The theory of a quick fix is entirely false however, as these foods/drinks only worsen the problem. Consuming foods that are of a 'junk' nature actually increase the volume of stress on your body. Stress can affect both your body and your mind. People under large amounts of stress can become tired, sick, and unable to concentrate or think clearly.

The following are common examples of how people react with food when they become overwhelmed with stress.

Fast Food Intake -It is common in this day and age for people to eat out rather than stay home and cook meals, generally because people don't want to cook after a hard day at work.

Work is normally the biggest cause of this, but there can be countless reasons for why people do not want to cook, for example family problems. The problem with this convenience is that the foods consumed from a fast food shop/restaurant play a hindrance on your overall health. It is also an expensive habit that can cost you money in the long haul. Money problems also increase stress levels.

Forgetting/Skipping Meals -It is important to eat three meals a day and most people know this, but stress can have the effect of making people skip, or forget to eat their meals. People who are overly stressed tend to pick up this habit and find out that later on in the day they will become hungry, and more than likely resort to eating junk food to sort their hunger.

Coffee Intake - Caffeine also has negative side effects on the brain and nervous system if taken in vast quantities. Although it can give you a quick boost when required, the fatigue will catch up once the caffeine has worn off. You should not need caffeine to focus, and if you do, this lack of focus is your body's way of telling you it needs rest. An over excess of caffeine can lead to negative effects such as restlessness, lapses of concentration and a decrease in your ability to be fully effective. Caffeine also has a massive impact on the hormones in your body. The following hormones are increased under the influence of caffeine.

1. Adenosine - Alerts you but causes sleep problems in the future.
2. Adrenaline - Gives you an extra boost but will make you feel fatigued once the adrenaline has worn off.
3. Cortisol - The Stress hormone. Makes you crave fatty foods.
4. Dopamine - Initially makes the person feel good but once worn off, generates a low and possible dependence/addiction

Eating the Wrong Food Types -The problem people have when under stress is that they crave foods that are high in the nutrients which should be limited. This is down to the hormone called cortisol

(An adrenal-cortex hormone that is active in carbohydrate and protein metabolism) that is produced when under stress. A person that is stressed will generally go for foods that have high contents of fats and sugars.

Fad Dieting -When people become stressed, they tend to put on weight. This is due to the amount of cortisol produced which in turn, leads to a high amount of fatty foods consumed. Due to this problem, people try to lose weight quick by either going on fad diets, or cutting out food entirely. This can be a very dangerous choice to make as you are not getting all the vital nutrients you need for your body to function properly. The results may look good for you in the short run, but in the long term your body will suffer because of this.

Constantly Picking at Foods - When people become stressed, they notice that they begin to eat much more than they normally would. When a person is not stressed, they only tend to eat food when they are hungry (ideally this should only be three times a day). The situation is very different under stress; in fact it is quite the opposite. Under stress, a person will eat when they are not even hungry and constantly pick at fatty snacks.

Diet can play an important role in the relief of stress. Eat a balanced diet and avoid foods that may increase tension e.g. coffee, tea, and foods high in sugar. When you're feeling tense, there are many ways to manage and, in fact, reduce stress levels. Your diet and nutrition choices can make your stress levels go up or down. Certain foods provide comfort and actually increase levels of hormones in the body that naturally fight stress. Other types of foods and beverages can reduce stress by lowering the levels of hormones that trigger it.

Beverages and drink- Sometimes, it's the effect of a food or drink that can help reduce stress, not necessarily its nutrients. A warm cup of tea, milk can actually calm many people. There's the soothing effect of sipping a warm drink, regardless of the flavour - but certain herbs, like lavender and chamomile, have been shown to have a relaxing effect on their own. A centuries-old home remedy for getting a better night's sleep, warm milk helps because it has a relaxing effect on the body. Calcium-rich foods are an essential part of a healthy diet for bone health, but they also help with stress reduction. Milk and other dairy foods with calcium and added vitamin D can help muscles relax and stabilize mood.

Gratify with Dark Chocolate- Dark chocolate in the diet can reduce stress in two ways its chemical impact and its emotional impact. Chocolate feels like such an indulgence that it can be a real treat to simply taste a piece of it, and that feeling alone can help to reduce stress. Dark chocolate, which is also rich in antioxidants, can also help to reduce stress by lowering levels of stress hormones in the body.

Select Carbohydrates- Carbohydrates have been found to increase levels of serotonin, a chemical in the body that can boost mood and reduce stress. Once serotonin levels are increased, people under stress experience improved cognitive function, meaning they can concentrate and work better. Carbohydrates in the diet that can reduce stress — savouring a bowl of pasta or macaroni and cheese feels soothing and can help you to relax. Just make sure to choose healthy carbohydrates like sweet potatoes and whole-grains for better nutrition, and limit fat-laden, calorie-dense toppings.

Enjoy Avocados- Avocados (tropical American tree bearing large pulpy green fruits) Is not only delicious mashed into guacamole or sliced onto a salad — they're also packed with omega-3 fatty acids. These healthy essential acids are known to reduce stress and anxiety, boost concentration, and improve mood.

Get essential fats- Fatty fish are also a good source of omega-3 fatty acids and an excellent way to use diet and nutrition to reduce stress because they also offer a major benefit to cardiovascular health. Omega-3 fatty acids and fatty fish have also been found to ease depression, because the chemicals improve communication between nerve cells. Fatty fish include tuna, halibut, salmon, herring, mackerel, sardines, mackerel and lake trout.

Nuts for energy- Nuts are full of vitamins, including B vitamins, and healthy fatty acids as well .B vitamin are an important part of a

healthy diet and can help to reduce stress. Almonds, pistachios, and walnuts can even help lower blood pressure levels. According to one study, pistachios in particular were found to have a role in reducing stress levels. Just remember to limit servings to just a handful a day to avoid excess calories.

Take More Vitamin C-Some studies have found that high levels of vitamin C help ease stress levels. One double-blind study reported on the value of taking 3,000 milligrams of vitamin C in a slow-release formula to reduce stress and levels of the stress-related hormone cortisol. Another study looked at the stress reduction effects of taking a supplement containing 1,000 mg of C, plus B vitamins, calcium, and magnesium. Eating citrus fruits, including oranges, grapefruits, and strawberries is a good start, but you would need a supplement to reach such high levels of these nutrients.

Thomas A Edison- *The doctor of the future will give no medication, but will interest his patients in the care of the human frame, diet and in the cause and prevention of disease.*

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